

Annual Report of the Information Technology Committee to the Faculty Senate, AY 2022-2023

Leadership

Due to the timing of the annual Faculty Senate election for representation on standing committees, the ITC holds its officer elections during the first meeting of the fall semester. In accordance with our bylaws revision approved by the Faculty Senate in Spring 2021, ITC formed an election subcommittee of continuing members in Spring 2022. That subcommittee solicited nominations for a Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretary before our first meeting in September 2022. Kimberly Meyer (Criminology & Criminal Justice) was elected as Chair, Sharon Clapp (Library) was elected Vice Chair, and Jessica Rutherford (World Languages) was elected Secretary.

Annual/Reoccurring Tasks, 2022-2023

To complete a continuing yearly task for the university, a Hardware-Software Subcommittee was formed during the fall semester, and that subcommittee solicited, evaluated, and ranked requests for hardware and software for student use.

New hardware requests were received in the amount of \$107,058, which was nearly triple the amount of last year's requests (which totaled \$38,000). \$95,458 in new requests were deemed appropriate to rank and move forward: The remaining \$11,600 were met via other mechanisms (technology already in stock or already requested through IT's normal classroom refresh budget) or deemed to still be within the refresh guidelines.

As in recent years, and regularly noted in the annual reports, the ITC approved maintenance, renewal, and upgrades for software currently available in student classrooms and labs, which has been customary for the last several years. Renewals and upgrades totaled \$_____, compared to last year's \$223,662. New requests totaled \$143,572.75. Of those new requests, the committee found some new requests to be appropriate. As in previous years, we ranked \$111,062.75 to be moved forward in the IT budgeting process, with the hope that any requests that cannot be funded through UPBC allocations might be able to be funded by other means. Should any of those new requests be funded now or in the future, they would increase the ongoing renewal/upgrade costs. The remaining \$32,510 were referred to freeware solutions or other potentially cost-saving solutions or tabled for future discussion of funding via other means.

Notably, the costs for existing software maintenance/renewals/upgrades have increased considerably over the last two years due to many companies ending discounts previously offered due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In the future, ITC may need to begin a process of reevaluating renewals in a more systematic manner, such as reviewing a third of programs annually, putting each on a three-year rotation.

Committee Activities Throughout the Year (discussions and feedback)

IT Liaison: The ITC takes its responsibility as a liaison or conduit for sharing information from IT to

the larger university (faculty members, departments, and administration) very seriously, as evidenced by its participation in efforts to refine current systems (Interfolio, CoursEval) and disseminate information about ongoing initiatives to the constituencies we represent. Throughout the year, we have entertained a large number of IT requests, concerns, and initiatives. Some of those topics are listed below, and minutes from our meetings can be found online or by request from the Secretary or Chair.

- Classroom technology issues (e.g., installation of projector screens over whiteboards in Copernicus), particularly in Fall 2022 when many people returned to campus after IT completed summer upgrades
- Communication about the launch of new faculty profile pages, as the first step toward our new website (see below on “Website”) and in response to the security vulnerability identified with our previous system last academic year
- Promoting faculty knowledge and use of the new XR Lab
- Finding mechanisms to allow for continued use of GoReact software, given licensing changes in the middle of the academic year
- Receiving faculty feedback regarding the new Online Archiving practice in Outlook (implemented July 2022) and finding workarounds/solutions to help faculty
- Compiling faculty feedback regarding SelectSurvey and other survey software options, so IT can use its budget to meet faculty needs as much as possible (see also “Duplicity of Software,” below)

Website: The ITC has continued its role as a liaison and sounding board for faculty feedback regarding plans for the university’s ongoing website upgrade, which is scheduled to launch within the next few weeks. Throughout Summer 2022, ITC members served on a website subcommittee to provide feedback on Marketing & Communication’s plans for the new content and format, especially surrounding faculty profile pages. During the 2022-2023 academic year, Marketing & Communication also sought feedback from all ITC members regarding department webpages and content guidelines, which were approved by the ITC. The ITC Chair has also served as the faculty representative on the university’s Web Steering Committee for the last few years, and that relationship has been very positive and is expected to continue throughout this summer and in future years.

Online Portfolios: ITC continues to monitor use of online portfolios and successes/concerns of the various parties involved with their use. Chair Meyer has been working in this role along with an AAUP representative for the last four years and continued in that role this year. Interfolio was used for all transmission of portfolios this academic year (i.e., moving portfolios among candidates, DEC’s, Deans, the Promotion & Tenure Committee, and the Provost), even if candidates continued to organize their materials within OneDrive and link to the Interfolio system. That process will be reviewed and refined this summer so it is ready for the start of the 2023-2024 academic year, as our understanding is that the Provost and IT have extended the contract with Interfolio. (Note: ITC has not been consulted about any expansion of the use of Interfolio for sabbatical leave applications or faculty searches, although Interfolio does have options to add those functions.)

CoursEval for Student Opinion Surveys: ITC has monitored faculty concerns about CoursEval throughout the year. We received a request from the Faculty Senate in March to review the concerns and potentially provide recommendations. This request was not received in time to make recommendations for Spring 2023 implementation; however, we are currently preparing to survey the faculty in an effort to gather feedback from beyond the listservs. The university is under contract

for CoursEval, but we expect to make recommendations about continued use and possibly “best practices” in the fall (see “Initial Goals for AY 2023-2024,” below).

Duplicity of Software: The committee resumed its conversation from Spring 2022 on the topic on duplicity of software, including the multiple survey software solutions and math/engineering programs. ITC has been going through a process of consulting the relevant departments and users when we receive inquiries from IT and others about possibly consolidating options.

Summer Subcommittee: Given the significant amount of work IT does over the summer (e.g., classroom updates, the ongoing website upgrade project), the ITC Chair will be engaged with continued work as a faculty representative throughout the summer. This is in accordance with our bylaws, as amended in Spring 2021. Additional members – especially those on a 12-month schedule – may be called on for additional support.

Initial Goals for AY 2023-2024

1. **Student Opinion Surveys/CoursEval:** Complete our study of CoursEval and report back to the Faculty Senate about our findings, with recommendations for its continued use.
2. **Website:** Continue offering feedback and assisting with communication regarding the new university website, especially as it is launched within the next few weeks and refined throughout 2023.
3. **Duplicity of Software:** Consider solutions to reduce duplicity of software used on campus (e.g., Zoom/Teams/Skype/ WebEx for calls; SelectSuey/Qualtrics/SurveyMonkey for surveys) to try to consolidate/reduce cost if needed.
4. **Continuity of Success:** Continue practices that have been successful for the last two years, including (1) having the ITC Chair meeting with the CIO, CTI representative, and website representative between the monthly ITC meetings to prepare for new and upcoming issues of interest/concern and (2) inviting speakers (e.g., UPBC Chair, President of the Faculty Senate) to monthly ITC meetings to discuss current issues and facilitate information sharing.

As we have learned over the last two years, the ITC will continue to be an essential conduit for information sharing regarding university technology initiatives, as charged in the committee’s bylaws:

- A. *Prioritizing all projects related to academic computing that require IT department resources. Purchases formerly handled through the budget process, through appeals to Deans, or to the CIO, or through departmental expenditure, should be referred to the ITC for consultation and prioritization.*
- B. *Developing policy recommendations related to academic computing.*
- C. *Reviewing all policies that impact academic computing*

Respectfully submitted,
Kimberly Meyer, ITC Chair
April 28, 2023